

SUMMARY

2003 NOAA FISHERIES CONSTITUENT SESSIONS

South Atlantic Region

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals are responsible for making the 2003 Constituent Sessions for the South Atlantic region a success. To acknowledge the contributions of each of these individuals by name is not possible because so many people and organizations assisted in this endeavor. We especially thank the participants for sharing their views during the sessions. Without their participation, the constituent sessions would not have been successful.

We thank the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) for all their support, both financial and in-kind. It is gratifying to be part of a process in which a federal agency actively seeks its constituents' opinions on important issues. Dr. William Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, participated in each of the constituent's sessions. Without his participation, the process would not have been so well received.

Finally, we thank the Pacific States Fishery Management Commission for selecting **MerrellKatsouros LLP** to help with the 2003 Constituent Sessions. We have learned a great deal from listening to the fisheries stakeholders and we hope that knowledge is reflected in our reports.

MERRELLKATSOUROS LLP

MerrellKatsouros LLP is a registered limited liability partnership in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Mary Hope Katsouros, Esq. and William Merrell, PhD, founded the MerrellKatsouros Partnership in June of 2002. The Partnership focuses on developing policies that balance the use and conservation of our ocean and coastal resources. The Partnership also provides public education on marine resource issues. Core competencies at MerrellKatsouros LLP include the abilities to understand complex interactions of human systems with natural systems at local, regional and national scales and to apply these understandings to the design of governance principles and management systems. MerrellKatsouros LLP personnel are recognized experts in formulating strategic approaches to issues and in designing specific solutions to critical issues by taking a vision or concept to goal statements, then to definitive objectives, and finally to performance measures.

Mary Hope Katsouros and William J. Merrell of MerrellKatsouros LLP prepared this report as part of the requirements of their Contract with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. The series of reports produced under this contract reflect the views and interpretation of MerrellKatsouros LLP and not those of the National Marine Fisheries Service or the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. MerrellKatsouros LLP is solely responsible for the report and its contents.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROJECT

1.1 Origin and Description of the Project

Present-day laws, policies, and paradigms encompassing management of U.S. Marine Fisheries can be traced back to the recommendations of a 1969 report, *Our Nation and the Sea*, by the Commission on Marine Science, Engineering, and Resources (Stratton Commission). The recommendations of the Stratton Commission led to the creation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1970 and the transfer into this new agency of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), then the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

The Stratton Commission also laid the groundwork for the passage of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. A principal feature of the Act was the creation of eight (8) regional Fishery Management Councils that represented a decentralized, participatory system with significant stakeholder involvement in fisheries conservation and allocation decisions. Over the years, the eight councils have evolved individually and exhibit significant differences with respect to policies, practices, and levels of public participation and access.

Most stakeholders believe that the present system of fishery management needs improvement, but they are unsure about the nature of the problem, the type of change required, the possible options, and how best to measure progress.

As the diverse interests of marine resource stakeholders increasingly diverge, and as the political resolve to reshape existing legal and regulatory processes grows, there is a critical need for a systematic evaluation of fisheries management and the process of public participation in that management. To generate information important to the pending reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA, P.L. 94-265), Congress and the National Marine Fisheries Service are working to better understand ways for the United States to fulfill its responsibilities in marine stewardship. Recent and ongoing evaluation efforts include: the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, Congressional hearings on Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, and a number of Congressionally mandated studies (key works: National Academy of Public Administration, Court, Congress and Constituencies: Managing Fisheries by Default; National Academy of Science, Science and Its Role in the National Marine Fisheries Service; Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, A Perspective on the National Marine Fisheries Service: Issues and Recommendations); and National Academy of Public Administration (Kammer Report), An Independent Assessment of the Resource Requirement for the National Marine Fisheries Service.

A key recommendation of the Kammer Report is that “The (NOAA Fisheries) Assistant Administrator design and implement processes for developing and evaluating its programs and updating its policies that involve constituents and partners where these groups or individuals have expertise and/or will be affected.” This project is a response to that recommendation.

1.2 How the Project was Conducted

NOAA Fisheries, working with the Pacific States Fisheries Management Commission, contracted with MerrellKatsouros LLP to schedule a series of regional constituent sessions and to evaluate constituent’s e-mail communications. The purpose of the sessions was to gather public input on ways to improve the effectiveness of NOAA Fisheries and its management of living marine resources.

The regional sessions were a collaborative effort that involved all major marine fisheries interests. The primary objective was to assemble and analyze the diverse opinions, attitudes, and perspectives of marine resource stakeholders as they relate to the broad themes of U.S. fisheries management. A secondary objective was to identify possible performance measures.

The meetings were announced in the *Federal Register*, on the NOAA Fisheries web page, and on the web page of each of the regional Fishery Management Councils. In addition, stakeholders unable to participate at the regional sessions were encouraged to use the E-Comments pilot program to share their views. The following questions were developed to assist stakeholders:

1. What are the most important issue facing fisheries in your region?
2. Who has responsibility over this issue? If unclear or uncertain, who should be in charge?
3. Does the solution require (a) no change to the present administrative or statutory structure; (b) administrative changes, and if so what would you propose; or (c) statutory changes, and if so, what would they be?
4. How could one measure if the solution is being properly implemented and working?
5. Briefly describe the best way to keep you informed about changes within NOAA Fisheries and fisheries management?

The constituent sessions for the South Atlantic region were held in conjunction with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The Council graciously arranged and announced the sessions which were held on September 18, 2003, in Pawley's Island,

South Carolina. Fifty-three stakeholders participated in the session. Sixteen of the stakeholders made statements. In addition, sixty-one email messages were received that commented on fisheries management in the region.

At the beginning of the each session, Dr. William Hogarth presented his views on the status of U.S. Marine Fisheries. Dr. Hogarth's presentation is summarized in Chapter 2, and a copy of his visual aids is available in Appendix 2. There was also a discussion about the region's fisheries led by Dr. Hogarth and the NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Regional Council, the fisheries under its management, and important topics now being considered. After the presentations, the stakeholders presented their views. A summary of the stakeholders' comments is contained in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2

U.S. MARINE FISHERIES – PRESENTATION BY DR. WILLIAM HOGARTH

This chapter contains a summary of the national status of U.S. Marine Fisheries presented at the regional constituent sessions by the Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, Dr. William Hogarth. Appendix 2 contains Dr. Hogarth's slides.

The following are excerpts from Dr. Hogarth's opening remarks:

...We do have great fisheries in this country. We know that management works, and it's just a matter of working together.

...We're responsible and you're responsible for managing around 952 stocks, of those, 259 of them are considered major, and some are considered minor stocks. When we say minor, the only reason is because we look at it from a standpoint of landings, because we have to give Congress a report. Each year we give Congress a report on major and minor stocks.

Twenty species have come off the overfished list in the last five years, and 25 fish stocks have come off the overfishing list. We still have 86 overfished stocks, but about 70 of

those already have rebuilding plans in place. We implemented a schedule to have all 86 stocks with rebuilding plans no later than 2005 [two of them in 2005, the rest (84) of them will probably be in 2004)]. We added seven species last year and we took six off. So it goes back and forth when you manage a stock for conservation and use.

If you look at the commercial fishery in the U.S., we land about 9.5 billion pounds in the U.S. and we're the world's fourth largest fishing nation. These fish have value at dockside of about 3.2 billion dollars. We import about 18.5 billion dollars in fishery products and we export only 11.8. So, we have a deficit in fisheries related trade.

...U.S. Citizens consumed about 14.8 pounds per person in 2001 and last year shrimp was the number one crop in the U.S. It overtook tuna.

...We are importing between 60 and 70 percent of all the seafood we utilize in this country, and we're importing about 88 percent of all the shrimp utilized in the U.S. We import shrimp from 33 countries. We do not currently have the standards on antibiotics in this country that other countries have. We are getting quite a few shrimp imported into the U.S. and, in turn, that has really flooded the market. The imports are really becoming a problem for our fisheries and we need to look at how we can help in this effort. I think aquaculture from foreign countries is

producing very inexpensive products. A lot of money is being invested.

We don't do much in this country with aquaculture. We are in the process now of trying to determine the role of NOAA Fisheries and how we should be doing aquaculture.

...The recreational fishing industry has over 17 million people that fish. They make 65 to 70 million fishing trips per year. They land about 135,000 metric tons...

...Over 17 million Americans participated in recreational fishing in 2002, totaling over 65 million fishing trips and supporting almost 350,000 jobs with an economic impact of more than \$30 billion.

...The economic value of the commercial fishery is also around 28 to 29 billion dollars. Therefore, we're dealing with a total fishery worth close to 60 billion dollars in gross national product. If you look at management of overfished stocks and opportunities, that could be increased at least 15 to 20 percent. So, we have our work cut out for us.

We have about 349,000 jobs supported by the recreational industry. Factoring in personal incomes and related expenditures, it really gets to be very big business.

The top ranking recreational fishing state, of course, is Florida. California follows in second place. If Texas provided data, Texas would be ranked number three.

Excerpts from Dr. Hogarth's slide presentation follow:

*THE STATE OF U.S. MARINE FISHERIES IS
IMPROVING*

...The State of U.S. Marine Fisheries is improving. We have been making steady, incremental, progress in improving the nation's marine fisheries.

- *Status of Stocks: 932 federally managed stocks*
- *259 major stocks account for 99.9 percent of total landings, the rest (672) are considered minor stocks*
- *695 stocks have unknown status*
- *86 stocks still listed as overfished, but we continue our commitment to rebuilding*

LET ME TELL YOU WHY:

I think we are improving. In the last five years, we have reduced the number of stocks from both the overfished and overfishing categories:

- *Overfished – 20 removed, 7 added = +13*
- *Overfishing – 26 removed, 12 added = +14*
- *70 rebuilding plans have been adopted*

MY PRESENTATION WILL FOCUS ON:

- *Value of U.S. Marine Fisheries: Commercial statistics, Recreational Statistics, and Import/Export Statistics*
- *How the Region is Doing*
- *Challenges and Goals*

VALUE OF U.S. MARINE FISHERIES

U.S. RECREATIONAL FISHERY STATISTICS

- *Over 17 million participants*
- *Over 65 million fishing trips per year*
- *Over 135 thousand metric tons landed per year*
- *Economic impact of more than \$30 billion*

- *More than 349,000 jobs supported*

Ecosystem-based management affects the recreational industry quite a bit in that one needs to look at Marine Protected Areas or other things that may protect fish. If you look at Number 3 of my goals, where it says stabilize for maximum economic benefit, I think that recreational is part of the maximum economic benefit. The big issue in the future is the allocation between commercial and recreational because the recreational industry is growing.

MY TEN GOALS

- 1. Review National Standard 1 Guidelines*
- 2. Explore Ecosystem-based management*
- 3. Stabilize fisheries for maximum economic benefit and improve rebuilding plans*
- 4. Increase communication and cooperative research with industry*
- 5. Promote U.S. seafood*
- 6. Incorporate ocean observing system*

7. *Minimize bycatch and develop new gear technology*
8. *Develop pilot projects in aquaculture*
9. *Improve timeliness and responsiveness in management*
10. *Export gear technology internationally to help recover endangered species*

We have made great progress in management. There are a lot of success stories, but we still have a lot of work to do. We need to make sure that we take credit for what has been done and we should be dedicated to improving management.

Summer flounder is coming off the overfished list. The surfclam and ocean quahog are no longer classified as overfished. Squid and butterfish are no longer overfished. Salmon runs this year are very high.

The listing criteria for the Endangered Species list, the Jeopardy Standard, and Essential Fish Habitat are all issues that must be covered. The Council is required to designate Essential Fish Habitat for all of these 952 species for four life stages.

We need to be timelier and more responsive. I don't know if we can do anything with that before Magnuson is reauthorized, which will probably be in about a year.

We are trying to beef up our Constituent Services in NOAA Fisheries.

My [Hogarth's] job, and people might disagree with me, but the job I took is to manage these fisheries for maximum economic benefit to the country. And that means that you are going to have stocks that will be reduced to probably 50 to 60 percent of their natural levels. I feel pretty confident that cooperative research is an excellent way to make progress.

We need to do a better job of promoting seafood in the U.S. Just because a stock is overfished, does not mean it should not be utilized by the American public if a rebuilding plan is in place.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

3.1 The Council

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The SAFMC manages fisheries in federal waters off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and east Florida. The council has 13 voting members – one from the National Marine Fisheries Service, four from the state fishery agencies, and eight public members.

SAFMC members serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce from lists of nominees submitted by the governors of the states. Appointed members may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. Non-voting members include representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, State Department, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is headquartered in Charleston, S.C. The role of the Council is to develop fishery management plans (FMPs) needed to

manage fishery resources within the 200-mile limit, commonly known as the EEZ. It extends offshore from state waters (three miles in the South Atlantic) to 200 nautical miles. Outer boundaries of the EEZ off the southeastern coast vary according to areas where jurisdictional boundaries meet with Bermuda, the Bahamas, and Cuba.

The SAFMC meets four times each year, once in each of the southeastern states. The Council involves the public through informal public scoping meetings, public hearings and input at Council meetings for regulatory proposals and amendments to FMPs. Proposed rule changes and other actions are then sent to NOAA Fisheries for further review, public comment and approval before being implemented.

In addition, the SAFMC receives input and recommendations from knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities and members of the public who serve on various committees and panels. These include Advisory Panels, the Scientific & Statistical Committee and Stock Assessment Panels.

The port of Beaufort, North Carolina is the highest producing in the South Atlantic region. In 2002, fishermen landed 82 million pounds at Beaufort valued at \$19 million.

3.2 Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for the Region

The SAFMC is responsible for nine fishery management plans. The plans are:

1. Fishery Management Plan for South Atlantic Golden Crab

Regulations for the golden crab fishery management plan went into effect on October 28, 1996. Regulations require that all fishers that have been issued a Federal vessel permit for the golden crab fishery in the South Atlantic region to complete and submit a logbook form for each fishing trip on which golden crabs are caught. For regulatory purposes, the South Atlantic region is divided into three golden crab fishing zones. The Northern Zone is defined as the EEZ north of 28 degrees N, latitude. The Middle Zone is defined as the EEZ from 25 degrees N, latitude to 28 degrees N, latitude. The Southern Zone is defined as the EEZ south of 25 degrees N, latitude. Federal vessel permits are issued for a specific zone and fishing is only allowed in the zone for which the permit is issued.

The purpose of the logbook program is to provide a suitable method of comprehensive data collection for the fishery. Additional golden crab fishery data is available in the Trip Interview Program (TIP). TIP data collection is conducted by NOAA Fisheries and state fishery agents who sample catches at the conclusion of commercial fishing trips and provides information on size frequency of individual crabs landed. If a permitted vessel did not fish during a calendar month, a report has to be

submitted stating that the vessel was inactive with regard to golden crab fishing during that month.

2. Fishery Management Plan for South Atlantic Shrimp

The SAFMC prepared this FMP in 1992 and NOAA Fisheries approved and implemented it in 1993. At the time the Shrimp FMP was implemented, the Council was concerned about bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery, and began developing management measures that would reduce bycatch through an FMP amendment. Since implementing the FMP, shrimp fishermen have been required to install Turtle Excluder Devices to reduce fishing impacts on sea turtle populations and Bycatch Reduction Devices to reduce shrimp trawl impacts on finfish species.

3. Fishery Management Plan for South Atlantic Snapper Grouper

In 1983, the fishery management plan for the snapper/grouper species complex was first implemented. Initially, regulations consisted of minimum sizes, gear restrictions and a provision for the designation of special management zones (SMZs). Early attempts to develop more effective management measures were thwarted by lack of data for the resource and the fishery. Although the condition of many of the species within the snapper/grouper complex remains unknown, improved data collection has

provided more information on some of the most commercially and recreationally valuable species. Strict management measures, including prohibition of harvest in some cases, have been implemented. The SAFMC is also considering the use of marine protected areas as a management tool for snapper/grouper species.

One species within the snapper/grouper complex, wreckfish, is managed separately under an Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) program developed cooperatively with industry.

In the snapper/grouper fishery, measures to reduce bycatch include a prohibition on the use of trawls, fish traps, and entanglement nets to harvest snapper/grouper species. In addition, the use of bottom longline gear is limited to depths of 50 fathoms or more and the gear is prohibited south of St. Lucie Inlet, Florida.

4. Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coast Red Drum

Currently, red drum are managed jointly by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the SAFMC – the Commission through Amendment 1 to the Interstate FMP for red drum, and the Council through Amendment 2 to the Atlantic Coast Red Drum FMP. In federal waters, the red drum fishery has been closed for several years, with fishing occurring only in state waters.

5. Fishery Management Plan for Coral, Coral Reefs, and Live/Hard Bottom Habitats of the South Atlantic Region

Through the Coral FMP the Council has protected coral, coral reefs, and live/hard bottom habitat in the South Atlantic region by prohibiting all harvest or possession of these resources which serve as EFH to many managed species. Another measure implemented through the Coral FMP was the designation of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern, a unique and fragile deepwater coral habitat off southeast Florida that is protected from all bottom tending fishing gear.

6. Secretarial Fishery Management Plan for Dolphin/Wahoo

Adopting a precautionary approach to management, the SAFMC, in cooperation with the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils, has recently completed a Dolphin/Wahoo FMP for the Atlantic. Recognizing the significant importance of the dolphin/wahoo fishery to the recreational fishing community in the Atlantic (historically 87 percent recreational harvest), the goal of the plan is to maintain the status quo relative to resource allocation while maintaining current harvest levels of dolphin.

7. Fishery Management Plan for Sargassum

The SAFMC is concerned about the impacts of commercial harvest of Sargassum, a very important resource. Over a 22-year period (1976-1997), 203.2 mt (448,000 lb) of Sargassum were harvested off the southern Atlantic states. This FMP was approved to provide protection for the most valuable pelagic habitat occurring in the South Atlantic. The SAFMC has developed this FMP to protect and manage Sargassum as a fishery resource and to conserve this resource as EFH off the U.S. Atlantic coast from the North Carolina/Virginia boundary through the east coast of Florida, including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys. In analyzing the actions and alternatives in the FMP, Sargassum is discussed as both a fishery resource and as habitat for other managed species.

8. Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagics of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico

The management of coastal migratory pelagics, including king mackerel and Spanish mackerel is an excellent example of the effectiveness of proper management. Prior to the 1980s, mackerel catches were essentially unregulated. Introduction of airplane reconnaissance and large power-assisted gillnet vessels in the commercial fishery took advantage of the schooling nature of the fish and greatly increased catches. Harvests by both recreational and commercial fishermen in the 1970s and early 1980s led to overfishing. Federal regulations were implemented in 1983 to control harvest and rebuild dwindling stocks of king and Spanish mackerel. Different migratory groups were later managed separately, and quotas, bag limits and trip limits established to rebuild the

mackerel fisheries. The FMP, approved April 1, 1982, provided gear regulations that included the elimination of drift gillnets in 1990. Management measures developed by the South Atlantic Council for the Atlantic migratory groups of king and Spanish mackerel have been very successful in rebuilding stocks, and the mackerel fishery remains sustainable and economically viable for both recreational and commercial fishermen.

9. Fishery Management Plan for South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Spiny Lobster

The FMP largely extends Florida's rules regulating the fishery to the EEZ throughout the range of the fishery, i.e. North Carolina to Texas. The management measures include: specifying minimum size limit and closed season, requiring degradable panels, prohibiting use of spears or hooks, limited attractant to 200 per vessel, required attractants to be held in shaded box, required trap number and color code be displayed, created special recreational two-day sessions before commercial sections, prohibited possession of egg-bearing lobster, and required reporting of landings.

CHAPTER 4

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY CONSTITUENTS

This chapter provides a summary of the issues presented by participants at the constituent sessions and provided electronically through email. The issues have been divided into national and regional topics. For this report, regional issues are issues that primarily affect the South Atlantic region.

Sessions of the 2003 NOAA fisheries constituent hearings for the South Atlantic region were held September 18th in Pawley's Island, South Carolina, in conjunction with a meeting of the South Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Council. These constituent sessions had 53 attendees, 16 of whom made presentations during the sessions. Sixty-one email messages were received from constituents from the south Atlantic region. Of the sixteen topics identified as national issues, the South Atlantic constituents provided comments on twelve. The sixteen topics include: aquaculture-marine; bycatch; councils; ecosystem management; economic, social and cultural issues; enforcement; essential fish habitat; infrastructure – land-based; management, Magnuson Stevens Act; marine mammals; marine protected areas; NOAA leadership; overcapitalization/rationalization; Pew Oceans Commission, National Commission on Ocean Policy; regulatory streamlining; and science/data/observations. Responses to these issues are summarized below:

NATIONAL ISSUES

National issues identified by constituents either at regional sessions or electronically, by topic in alphabetical order, are:

1. **Aquaculture - Marine**

- No comments

2. **Bycatch, Bycatch Reduction**

- Dead discards are a wasted resource
- Sea turtles are still being caught by trawlers and in gill nets
- Seeing more fish now but have to discard 20-30% of the catch
- Gear technology works well with highly migratory species fisheries
- Need more money for gear technology development programs
- Need more gear technology outreach including workshops
- Must work with the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to assure other countries' compliance with bycatch rules

3. **Councils**

- Performance varies among councils
- Should have their own attorneys, not use NOAA's
- Council meetings should be held after work hours so the working public can attend
- Need more members who are involved in the ocean but not fishers

4. **Ecosystem Management**

- Must manage the entire system
- Must reflect the interests of all users of the ecosystem
- Proceeding with ecosystem management with the present shortfalls of data on Individual species is scary
- Lots of information on ecosystem conditions is gathered by different scientists utilizing different techniques, but it needs to be coordinated

5. **Economic, Social and Cultural Issues**

- No comments

6. **Enforcement**

- Many fishery regulations are unenforceable
- Dockside enforcement is much more realistic than closing the ocean with (the enforcing Agency) having no boats, no manpower and no funds
- Need stricter laws and more severe punishments for dumpers and polluters

7. **Essential Fish Habitat**

- Need to increase our efforts to improve Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)
- EFH efforts need more funding
- Stop (more) dense development along our coasts
- Dredging is killing habitat
- Stop polluting our waterways
- The inshore areas where reef fish spend their juvenile stage is not being protected from fishing methods or coastal development and pollution

8. Infrastructure – Land-based

- No comments

9. Management, Magnuson-Stevens Act

- Fisheries management works well
- Fisheries regulations are too complicated
- Commercial fishers are being regulated out of business
- Managers don't use the data properly
- Latent permits need to be removed
- Management goal is to maintain healthy fish populations
- We are 27 years into Magnuson-Stevens Act and still don't have basic catch information for many species
- Lawyers (non-government) are the biggest problem in fisheries management
- All longline fishing should be banned
- Time for NOAA Fisheries and the councils to review all regulations and give something back to the commercial fisherman
- A crisis mentality now dominates management
- There has been a tidal wave of new fisheries regulations
- Open access to fish by the charter boat industry is hurting commercial fishers, especially when they sell their catch to restaurants
- States need to do a better job protecting nearshore waters
- Need to get rid of present managers and change policies to favor fish sustainability over immediate profits
- Fishing should immediately stop when a species is classified as overfished
- Should immediately pull (eliminate) all longline, fishtrap, and netting permits

10. Marine Mammals

- No comments

11. Marine Protected Areas

- Stop closing portions of the ocean without valid reasons
- Recreational anglers should be allowed to catch and release in no-fish zones
- Common sense is not being used in the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPA)
- Need MPAs that protect (fish) nursery grounds

12. NOAA Leadership

- Must strengthen the role of NOAA Fisheries in fisheries management
- Should continue doing their present great job
- Needs to take more of an international role
- Will have to coordinate approaches to ecosystem management
- Should set up a television channel like the weather channel that deals with fishing issues
- Should educate and enlist preservationists to monitor the waterways
- Fisheries should be removed from the Department of Commerce which focuses on commercial issues
- NOAA managers should get out from behind their desks and out on the water

13. Overcapitalization/Rationalization

- Limited access for a limited resource makes sense (and cents)
- Buyout latent permits and limit fleet size

14. Pew Oceans Commission, National Commission on Ocean Policy

- Pew outlines a path to sustainable fisheries

15. Regulatory Streamlining

- Must untangle the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) “rats nest”, the process is clumsy and ties up the managers who should be managing
- Bureaucratic process is broken. (Management actions) take too long and there are too many reviews

16. Science/Data/Observations

- Need more money for science
- Need workshops with users to explain the science
- Need more species-by-species assessments – some species are classified as overfished that are not
- Cooperative research is working well and should be expanded
- Commercial fishers are the only ones to suffer when the science is incomplete
- Science should pass an independent review
- Scientific monitoring of fish stocks should be done by University scientists who are less subject to conflicts-of-interest

Regional Issues

Topics identified by the constituents, specific to the South Atlantic, are the following:

- Swordfish longline fishing should be permanently banned from the Florida Straits including experimental permits (37 e-mails were on this subject)
- Need more work on sea turtles and Turtle Excluder Devices (TED). TEDs need to be used in a number of trawl fisheries
- Gillnet fisheries are still killing sea turtles
- Need to immediately implement the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)
- Need to revamp the shrimp industry to provide a quality domestic product
- Size limits on red snapper are too high, causing more to be killed and discarded than landed
- The angling community carries no weight with the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
- Commercial fishers are ignoring size limits on Kingfish because there is no enforcement
- Dolphin (mahi-mahi) size limits should be increased to 24 inches so they have a chance to spawn
- Dolphin weight limit should be ten pounds
- Red porgy restrictions are a joke – there are huge numbers of them out there
- Keep the inshore net ban – bait species are coming back and predators won't be far behind
- Should outlaw all taking of billfish in waters off Florida